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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KS](#) [KN](#)
SUBJECT: HYUNDAI CHAIRWOMAN ON KJI'S HEALTH AND FAMILY

Classified By: POL M/C James L. Wayman. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: During an August 25 breakfast with the Ambassador that focused primarily on Hyundai Asan's business in North Korea (septel), Hyundai Chairwoman Hyun Jong-eun said Kim Jong-il (KJI) appeared to be "in control of everything," was very charismatic and, ignoring advice from his doctors, still drank alcohol and smoked. The meeting with the North Korean leader was held at the Mount Myohyang guest villa; KJI suggested the two should meet again at the new Hamheung Majeon resort. Hyun thought she would be introduced to KJI's third son and heir-apparent Kim Jong-eun, but the meeting did not happen. End Summary.

KJI: Healthy and In Control

¶2. (C) At an August 25th breakfast with the Ambassador, Hyundai Chairwoman Hyun Jong-eun offered her observations on KJI's health and other family issues. Hyun said she expected to find KJI in declining health but was surprised to find him in control of everything, in good health and spirits, still detail-oriented, charismatic and with a good memory. According to Hyun, doctors told KJI four years ago to quit smoking, stop drinking and stop eating meat. Hyun observed that KJI lit a cigarette as soon as the formal one-hour meeting ended, drank champagne before dinner, whiskey cocktails during the meal, and continued to chain-smoke throughout their private dinner. Hyun also commented that medicine was brought to KJI once during the meal. Hyun said she left some health books with KJI, which she had brought in anticipation of having time to kill while waiting for her audience with Kim. Though the two never discussed KJI's health directly, he seemed to like the books.

Meeting Location: Myohyang

¶3. (C) The meeting with KJI took place at the Mount Myohyang guest villa, about a 1.5 hour drive from Pyongyang, where Kim Il-sung passed away and where gifts from foreign dignitaries are displayed. At the gift exhibition hall, Hyun saw one of Hyundai's first cars, a gift presented to Kim Il-sung by her late father-in-law and Hyundai founder Chung Joo-young. She also saw gifts from her late husband Chung Mong-heon.

¶4. (C) KJI told Hyun that he considered meeting her at another place, such as a villa in Wonsan, but found Mt. Myohyang to be the best location to escape the summer heat. For the next visit, KJI suggested meeting at the new Hamheung Majeon resort, which he boasted had more than 200 rooms.

Participants: Family First

15. (C) Kim Yang-gun, a trusted aide and KJI's point man for South Korea policy, attended the formal meeting with Hyun. KJI's mistress, Kim Ok, sat on a separate sofa and took notes, Hyun said. Hyun who had been asked to bring "only family" was accompanied by her 32 year old daughter Chung Ji-yi. Hyun had thought the instructions to bring only family might foreshadow a meeting with KJI's third son, heir-apparent Kim Jong-eun, but that meeting never materialized.

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